

**BACKGROUND PAPER FOR ACTION TAKEN UNDER
DELEGATED POWERS – NON KEY DECISIONS**

DESIGNATION OF POLLING PLACES (PART 3.8 No. 5)
(Background Paper prepared by Keith Simmons and Nikki Nepean)

In 2018 the Council undertook a Polling Places review. In the schedule below it is proposed to amend polling places in the two Constituencies identified as required by circumstances arising after the 2018 review. The specific areas are Bradfield (1), Dovercourt (2) and Clacton (Pier (3 & 4), Eastcliff (5 & 6), Coppins (Whitehall), Coppins (Wellesley) and St Johns (North Road) (7)).

In order to accommodate the process of making the stated changes, a limited interim review of the Polling Places adopted in 2018 was undertaken in late 2020. The limited review was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983. The limited interim review involved public notice on the council's website and at the Town Hall in Clacton-on-Sea from 24 November 2020 of the proposals and inviting comments on them. In addition, the views of the relevant Acting Returning Officer for the Parliamentary Constituency were sought as were the views of the relevant District and County Councillor(s), the Member of Parliament and (where applicable) the Parish/Town Council.

Consultees were specifically reminded that the proposals arising from a Polling Places (and Polling Districts) review must:

- seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in the local authority area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances
- seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled

While the views of consultees were sought on the proposals set out generally, views were explicitly sought on improving accessibility for electors who are disabled.

In the 28 day consultation period on the proposals there were no adverse comments received on any of them. On this basis, and with no other reason to reach a different conclusion on the proposals submitted for consultation, it is now submitted that the proposals be approved, the changes set out be made and the Head of Democratic Services & Elections authorised to implement this.

SCHEDULE TO THE BACKGROUND PAPER

Changes to Polling Places in the Polling Districts of the Parliamentary Constituencies shown (with the same changes being made to Local Government Polling Places):

Harwich and North Essex Constituency

1. At the time of the last review the approved designation of the polling district DD was the parish of Bradfield and the venue for the polling station was Bradfield Methodist Church.

Following the closure of Bradfield Methodist Church in 2020, located in the DD Bradfield polling district, a site visit was undertaken on 13 October 2020 to assess the suitability of the Bradfield Community centre as an alternative.

The purpose built Community Centre is located within the village of Bradfield, would provide an accessible resource to the majority of electors within the polling district and offers ample free parking together with disabled access and facilities. The venue

is all on one level with no known impediment to wheelchair access. The Returning Officer would have exclusive use of the entire premises on polling day.

It is submitted that the Bradfield Community Centre, The Street, Bradfield Essex CO11 2UU, would be a suitable alternative to the Bradfield Methodist Church. EM and HSDE recommend that the Bradfield Community Centre be utilised as the venue for polling stations at elections for the residents of Bradfield Parish. In view of the required change, it is further recommended that the parish of Bradfield be designated as the polling place for the parish (polling district DD).

2. At the time of the last review the approved designation for Dovercourt Vines and Parkeston (Vines) was Adult community Learning, Harwich Centre, Main Road, Harwich, Essex CO12 4AH. This is not within the Polling District of Dovercourt Vines and Parkeston (Vines) but within the polling district of Dovercourt Bay (The Hangings).

The Mayflower school, who own the grounds in which the centre was located, contacted the elections office to advise that due to remodelling of the entrance, the venue would no longer be able to operate when the school was open and therefore requested alternative arrangements be sought. Following a site visit in July 2020 an appropriate venue was identified adjacent to the previous polling station. The Vibe Youth Centre has accessible entrance and facilities within. It is within the grounds of the Mayflower school but features an independent entrance.

It is submitted that The Vibe Youth Centre, Main Road Harwich Essex CO12 4AH be designated as the polling stations for Dovercourt and Vines (Vines) (polling district CT). In view of the required change it is further recommended that Dovercourt and Vines (Vines) and Dovercourt Bay (The Hangings) be designated as the polling place for Dovercourt Vines (Vines) (polling district CT).

Clacton Constituency

3. At the time of the last review the approved designation for Pier East (polling district AW) was Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea Essex CO11 1SE. This designation was a clerical error and the designation should have been recorded as Church Hall, Christ Church United Reform Church, 6 Carnarvon Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 6BU. This venue is a more central location for the polling district it serves.

It is submitted that the designation of Pier East (polling district AW) is altered to Church Hall, Christ Church United Reform Church, 6 Carnarvon Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 6BU. In view of the required change it is further recommended that Pier East be designated as the polling place for Pier East (polling district AW)

4. At the time of the last review the approved designation for Pier West (polling district AX) was Church Hall, Christ Church United Reform Church, 6 Carnarvon Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 6BU. This designation was a clerical error and the designation should have been recorded as Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea Essex CO11 1SE. This venue is a more central location for the polling district it serves.

The EM and HSDE recommend that the designation of Pier West (polling district AX) is altered to Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea Essex CO11 1SE. In view of the required change it is further recommended that Pier West be designated as the polling place for Pier West (polling district AX)

5. At the time of the last review the approved designation for Eastcliff East (polling district AN) was Clacton Scout Headquarters Valley Road Clacton-on-Sea Essex

CO15 6NA. This designation was a clerical error and the designation should have been recorded as Holland FC Clubhouse Dulwich Road Holland-on-Sea Clacton-on-Sea Essex CO15 5HP. This venue is a more central location for the polling district it serves.

It is submitted that the designation of Eastcliff East (polling district AN) is altered to Holland FC Clubhouse Dulwich Road Holland-on-Sea Clacton-on-Sea Essex CO15 5HP. In view of the required change it is further recommended that Eastcliff East be designated as the polling place for Eastcliff East (polling district AN).

6. At the time of the last review the approved designation for Eastcliff West (polling district AO) was Holland FC Clubhouse Dulwich Road Holland-on-Sea Clacton-on-Sea Essex CO15 5HP. This designation was a clerical error and the designation should have been recorded as Clacton Scout Headquarters Valley Road Clacton-on-Sea Essex CO15 6NA. This venue is a more central location for the polling district it serves.

It is submitted that the designation of Eastcliff East (polling district AN) is altered to Clacton Scout Headquarters Valley Road Clacton-on-Sea Essex CO15 6NA. In view of the required change it is further recommended that Eastcliff West be designated as the polling place for Eastcliff West (polling district AO).

7. At the time of the last review the approved Polling Station Venue for Coppins (Wellesley) (polling district AH) and Coppins (Whitehall) (polling district AG) was Clacton Coastal Academy Community Centre, Pathfields Road, Clacton-on-Sea CO15 3JL. At the same time the approved designation for St Johns (North Road) (polling district BE) was Great Clacton Junior School, Craigfield Avenue, Clacton-on-Sea CO15 4HR.

There are currently no electors in Coppins (Whitehall) (polling district AG). There were at the time of preparing this report 71 electors in Coppins (Wellesley) (polling district AH).

The Polling Places for the three named Polling Districts are not within the respective Polling Districts. In addition, the approved venues of Clacton Coastal Academy and Great Clacton Junior School are not in the same County Council electoral division as the Polling Districts mentioned. In order to provide a polling station venue for electors in the three Polling Districts that is accessible, identifiable and within the same County Council Electoral Division when there are elections for a County Council there, it is submitted that the polling station venue for these polling districts will be Great Clacton Community Centre, 16-26 Valley Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 4AR. It is further recommended that St Johns (Tewksbury) be designated as the polling place for Coppins (Whitehall) (polling district AG), Coppins (Wellesley) (polling district AH) and St Johns (North Road) (polling district BE) to accommodate this. Electors in Coppins (Wellesley) (polling district AH) will continue to vote at Clacton Coastal Academy Community Centre for District Council elections as this is within the Coppins Ward. The same arrangements will be made should there become electors in the Coppins (Whitehall) (polling district AG).